



House Bill 558

Land Use – Agritourism – Definition

MACo Position: **SUPPORT**

To: Environment and Transportation
Committee

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From: Dominic J. Butchko

The Maryland Association of Counties (MACo) **SUPPORTS** HB 558. The bill expands the state definition of “agritourism” to include camping and incidental outdoor stays.

Agritourism is becoming a strong force for economic development in nearly all corners of Maryland. Recent advancements in the agricultural industry have led to new methods for generating revenue, while also preserving the core of what it means to be a farmer. Agritourism gives small farms, many of which have been in the same family for generations, a chance to increase revenue and potentially maintain the family business for generations ahead.

HB 558 would expand the state’s definition of agritourism by adding two additional acceptable practices to the statute. This bill strikes a balance between local autonomy and state policy. Counties would remain free to either opt into the state’s model definition or set their own standard.

HB 558 gives counties another tool in the toolbox while also preserving their ability to decide what definition of agritourism works best for their community. Accordingly, MACo urges the Committee to issue a **FAVORABLE** report for HB 558.